

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 /094 W
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R 211300Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9078
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 2926

PRETORIA ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT ZA
SUBJ: ZAMBIA: INTERNAL POLITICAL - GENERAL ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY: VINCE MIJONI, EDITOR OF THE ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL AND AVID UNIP LOYALIST ASSESSES UNIP'S POLITICAL PROSPECTS. HE SAYS KAUNDA INSISTS ON ELECTIONS BECAUSE HE IS COMMITTED TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. OTHERS AROUND HIM HAVE NO SUCH COMMITMENT AND WOULD PREFER THAT ELECTIONS NOT BE HELD OR AT THE LEAST THAT SOME WAY SHOULD BE FOUND TO ENSURE THAT KAUNDA IS NOT CHALLENGED AT THE PARTY'S GENERAL CONGRESS AT MULUNGUSHI. MIJONI EXPECTS KAUNDA WILL GET NINETY PERCENT OF THE VOTES AT MULUNGUSHI; HOWEVER, TURNING OUT THE YES VOTES IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS COULD BE A PROBLEM. UNIP LEADERSHIP HAS NOT DONE ITS JOB IN MOBILIZING THE PEOPLE, BUT ONCE IT DAWNS ON THEM THAT THEIR POSITIONS, WHICH
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BRING ECONOMIC SECURITY, MAY BE IN JEOPARDY, THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO GET CRACKING. END SUMMARY.

2. VINCENT MIJONI IS A UNIP AND KAUNDA LOYALIST. HE IS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN UNIP COMMITTEES CHARGED WITH DEVELOPING STRATEGY FOR THE COMING GENERAL ELECTIONS AND HAS BEEN GIVEN ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AS WELL. IN A LONG EVENING SESSION WITH THE

CHARGE AUGUST 20, HE PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF KAUNDA'S POLITICAL PROSPECTS.

3. KAUNDA ON DEMOCRACY: KAUNDA IS DETERMINED TO GO FORWARD WITH THE GENERAL ELECTIONS AND PLANS TO DO NOTHING TO PREVENT NKUMBULA, KAPWEPWE AND CHILUWE FROM PRESENTING THEIR CANDIDACIES AT THE UNIP SEPTEMBER 9 GENERAL CONGRESS AT MULUNGUSHI ROCK. THERE ARE THOSE AROUND KAUNDA WHO DO NOT HAVE HIS COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. THEY WOULD LIKE TO DISPENSE WITH ELECTIONS OR AT THE LEAST NEUTRALIZE OPPONENTS BEFORE MULUNGUSHI. KAUNDA HAS RESISTED THEIR PRESSURE OUT OF A SENSE OF COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY.

4. KAUNDA'S PROSPECTS AT MULUNGUSHI: KAUNDA WILL GET AT LEAST NINETY PERCENT OF THE SIX THOUSAND DELEGATE VOTES AT THE MULUNGUSHI PARTY CONGRESS. UNIP (FREEDOM HOUSE) IS SCRUTINIZING WITH CARE ALL DELEGATES. THE SLIGHTEST EVIDENCE OF LINGERING SYMPATHY FOR KAPWEPWE OR NKUMBULA IS GROUNDS FOR DISBARRING A DELEGATE. SHOULD THIS VETTING PROCESS NOT BE COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL, UNIP LOYALISTS ARE PREPARED TO USE INTIMIDATION AT MULUNGUSHI TO ENSURE THAT THE DELEGATES VOTE RIGHT. MIJONI COMMENTED THAT "IT WILL TAKE A BRAVE MAN TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST KAUNDA AT MULUNGUSHI."

5. GENERAL ELECTIONS: UNIP IS AIMING FOR AT LEAST AN EIGHTY PERCENT YES VOTE FOR KAUNDA IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS BUT MAY
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HAVE DIFFICULTY IN GETTING IT. KAUNDA HAD STRENGTHENED HIS POSITION IN THE SOUTH BY MAKING MAINZA CHONA PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL AND IN THE WEST BY MAKING LISULU PRIME MINISTER. EASTERN PROVINCE SHOULD BE SOLIDLY PRO-KAUNDA. THE LINE OF RAIL (COPPER BELT AND NORTHERN PROVINCE) IS A PROBLEM AREA. THIS IS THE MOST URBANIZED AREA OF ZAMBIA, IS HIGHLY POLITICIZED, BEMBA INFLUENCE IS STRONG, AND DISCONTENT CAUSED BY CONSUMER GOODS SHORTAGES IS PREVALENT. KAPWEPWE CAN BE EXPECTED TO CAPITALIZE ON HIS BEMBA SUPPORT AND URBAN DISCONTENT IN URGING A "NO" VOTE.

6. UNIP WEAKNESS: POTENTIAL PROBLEM IN TURNING OUT A YES VOTE FOR KAUNDA REFLECTS A FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESS OF UNIP. SINCE ITS VICTORY FIVE YEARS AGO, UNIP HAS BEEN RESTING ON ITS LAURELS. MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SPEND ALL OF THEIR TIME IN LUSAKA CONCENTRATING ON NATIONAL ISSUES RATHER THAN ON SEEING TO THE HEALTH OF LOCAL UNIP CELLS. INDISCIPLINE WITHIN UNIP IS RAMPANT AND THE PARTY LEADERSHIP HAS DONE NOTHING TO CORRECT THIS. MAINZA CHONA'S APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY GENERAL WILL DO LITTLE TO MAKE UNIP MORE EFFECTIVE. CHONA TALKS TOO MUCH AND LIKES TO PLAY THE CLOWN--ORGANIZING IS NOT HIS STRENGTH. HOWEVER, DESPITE ITS WEAKNESSES, UNIP CADRE CAN BE EXPECTED TO GET OUT THE YES VOTE ONCE IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT IF THIS DOES NOT

HAPPEN THEY MIGHT LOSE THEIR JOBS.

7. KAUNDA'S STRENGTH: KAUNDA'S PRIMARY POLITICAL STRENGTH IS HIS LACK OF IDENTIFICATION WITH ANY ONE TRIBE. TRIBALISM THEORETICALLY IS NOT A CONSIDERATION IN ZAMBIA, BUT IT RUNS THROUGH EVERYTHING. ALL OF THE NON-BEMBA IN ZAMBIA WILL MOBILIZE AGAINST KAPWEPWE BECAUSE HE REPRESENTS THE BEMBA. THEY WOULD DO THE SAME AGAINST NKUMBULA WHO IS THOUGHT OF AS THE LEADER OF THE TONGA. KAUNDA, WHILE NOT THE FIRST CHOICE OF ANY ETHNIC GROUP, IS THE SECOND CHOICE OF MOST ALL.

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PRETORIA ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR LOW

8. COMMENT: WE AGREE WITH MIJONI'S ASSESSMENT OF WHAT IS LIKELY TO HAPPEN AT MULUNGUSHI ROCK BUT ARE NOT AS SURE AS HE IS ABOUT THE WAY THE VOTING WILL RUN IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS. DISCONTENT WITH UNIP ALONG THE LINE OF RAIL IS, AS HE ADMITS, A REAL PROBLEM AND BEMBA SPEAKERS, WHO DOMINATE IN THAT AREA, REPRESENT 35 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. UNLESS UNIP PULLS UP ITS SOCKS, KAPWEPWE IF HE SO DESIRES COULD ENSURE THAT NOT MANY OF HIS FOLLOWERS VOTE FOR KAUNDA. THIS DEFECTION WOULD NOT NECESSARILY PREVENT KAUNDA FROM GETTING A FIFTY-ONE PERCENT YES VOTE, BUT IT COULD MAKE HIS MARGIN OF VICTORY UNCOMFORTABLY THIN.

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